Miscellanea.

A Chinese Public Garden.—In the centre of a serpentine sheet of water there is a rocky island, and on it a large temple of two stories, fitted up for the accommodation of the wealthy public. Pillars of carved wood support the roof; fretted groups of uncouth figures fill up the narrow spaces; while moveable latticed blinds screen the occupants from the warmth of the noonday sun. Nothing can surpass the beauty and truth to nature of the most minutely-carved flowers and insects prodigally scattered over every screen and cornice. This is the central and largest temple. A number of other light and aërial-looking structures of the same form are perched upon the corners of artificial rocky precipices and upon odd little islands. Light and fanciful wooden bridges connect most of these islands, and are thrown across the arms of the serpentine water, so that each sequestered spot can be visited in turn. At a certain passage of the sun, the main temple is shaded in front by a rocky eminence, the large masses of which are connected with great art and propriety of taste, but in shape and adjustment most studiously grotesque. Trees and flowers and tufts of grass are sown and planted, where art must have been taxed to the utmost to procure them lodgment. In another part of the garden there is a miniature wood of dwarf trees, with a dell and waterfall; the leaves, fruits, and blossoms of the trees are in proportion to their size. Tortuous pathways lead to the top of the artificial mountain, each turning formed with studied art to surprise and charm, by offering at every point fresh views and objects. Flowers and creepers sprout out from crevices; trees hang over the jutting crags; small pavilions crested with the white stork, their emblem of purity, are seen from almost every vista, while grottoes and rocky recesses, shady bowers and labyrinths, are placed to entrap the unwary, each with an appropriate motto, one inviting the wanderer to repose, another offering quiet and seclusion to the contemplative philosopher.—*Closing Events of the Campaign in China, by Captain Lock.*

Alton Towers.—Magnificent preparations are making at Alton Towers by the Earl of Shrewsbury, for the reception of his Royal Highness the Duke of Bordeaux. As the arrival of his Royal Highness will take place after nightfall, a temporary porch, designed by Mr. Pugin, the Earl's master of the works, is being erected, and will be illuminated by an infinity of lamps. The whole line of galleries dedicated to the arts and antiquities, viz. the armoury, with its mailed knights and blazoned banners; the picture gallery, with its splendid paintings; the octagon, with its sculpture and ancestral achievements; the Talbot gallery, with its *ensemble* of all that is gorgeous in pictorial, heraldic, or decorative art—forming an unrivalled vista of 500 feet in a straight line—will be brilliantly illuminated. In the centre of the Talbot gallery will be placed a splendid bust of his Royal Highness, by Tenerani, the eminent Italian sculptor.

A branch railway is about to be constructed to connect the town of Newbury with the Great Western Railway at the Pangbourn Station.

Mr. Rastrick, the engineer of the Brighton Railway, is now engaged in extending the survey for a railway from Worthing to Chichester, in connection with the present branch line from Brighton to Shoreham. We understand that the whole of the landowners and the Brighton Company are favourable to the project; and should the plan be carried into effect, as well as that for a line from Brighton through Lewes to Hastings, and that for connecting the latter place and Rye with the Dover line, all which projects are under favourable auspices, the short distance of eighteen miles from Portsmouth to Chichester would be the only gap in a regular coast line from Dover to Southampton.

Steel, when tempered so as to be very hard, becomes brittle. The steel chisels and tools with which artificers now cut and shape the metals, as they formerly did wood, require to be exceedingly hard; but they thus lose in regard to the *extent* of their elasticity, and hence are frequently broken. Cast iron, which is much harder than malleable or wrought iron, is very brittle, while soft iron and steel are the toughest things in nature.

Mr. W. Middlemore, of Birmingham, has given the liberal sum of 100*l.* to the Society of Arts and School of Design in that town.

Aërial Ship.—It is rather dangerous (says the *Sud*, of Marseilles) for a journal to make itself the vehicle of one of those pieces of news whose character necessarily is calculated to awaken the scepticism of most readers; we therefore deem it right, in giving the following account, to state that we do not make ourselves responsible for its truth in any way: we merely repeat what has been related to us by a person whose veracity has been hitherto unimpeached. Our informant affirms that a party of engineers are at this moment engaged at Marseilles in the construction of an aërial machine, the principal of whom, at Italian, has resided long in England (the classic country of modern industry), in which he has studied the elements of the theory which he is now attempting to put into practice. The platform of their experiments is situated at Notre Dame de la Garde, and we are told that the attempts of the aëronauts have not been unattended with success. Their machine represents a bird in shape: the wings, composed of a light frame of wood-work, are covered with silk, and are about to be fixed to the body of the machine. Three or four more weeks will suffice to bring the work to perfection. Paris, we are told, is to be the first place honoured by the venturous party, who hope to accomplish their flight in four or five hours. The time of day fixed for their departure is the evening. No one is to be admitted to partake the dangers and assured triumph of the favoured five, but a young lady, who has lately become the wife of one of the party. This last circumstance crowns the interest created by this extraordinary account, of which, we repeat, we do not assume the responsibility.

English Antiquities.—Some workmen employed in removing mud from the moat of Wesley Castle, near Birmingham, found a dinner plate of silver, from which a portion had been lost, as if melted away by fire. It bears on the rim a crest, and on the back the name of the maker, "Stephen Lawrence, Drury-lane, London," the word "London" being under a shield emblazoned with a crown rose. Several coins of Edward III. and of Edward I., a spur and spear head, with fragments of ancient pottery, have also been found among the few remaining ruins of the castle.

Mechanism of Pianos.—In one of Messrs. Broadwood's most improved six and a half octave pianofortes (for which we believe a patent has been taken out), the mechanism connected with the "action" consists of about 3,800 pieces of ivory, ebony, cedar, sycamore, lime-tree, mahogany, beech-wood, oak, pine, steel, iron, brass, lead, cloth, felt, leather, and vellum. Every one of these has to be fashioned with the most scrupulous exactness, and as scrupulously adjusted to its place. Many of the pieces are not more than a quarter of an inch square, some even less. The qualities of all the varieties of wood are closely studied, in order to determine their particular aptitude for the different parts, and it is thus that so many as seven or eight kinds are used in the "action" alone. One kind is preferred, because slender rods made of it will not warp; another kind because the grain is straight; a third because it is hard and smooth; a fourth because it is soft and smooth; and so on. Some of the rods are as much as three feet long, and only a sixth or a seventh of an inch in thickness.

Present State of the Iron Trade.—Eight furnaces, making 690 tons weekly, have been blown in since the 25th of September, and if about six more are added to this number, it will include all that are likely to be put in operation in Staffordshire until some further and considerable improvement takes place in the price of iron.

Iron Works.—The mills and forges at Merthyr are again in full operation. The late rains have materially benefited both masters and men.—*Cardiff Advertiser.*

At Boston, on Saturday last, an information was laid before the mayor and other magistrates, against Mr. Thomas Knowles, for having erected two tenements with end-walls of only four inches and a half thickness, the local act requiring them to be built nine inches. The penalty of 5*l.* in each case was suspended, in order to give him the opportunity of amending the building—It is intended to enforce the law in every case, and it is only to be regretted that the enactment is not general instead of local.

Yarmouth.—We are glad to be able to correct an error in our last week's number, which arose from extracting from the local papers. The estimate of the cost of the internal improvements of the gaol is about 900*l.* This is exclusive of the cost of the buildings of the House of Correction and the building sites for the same.

Worksop Manor House.—The building materials were sold on Tuesday last, by direction of his grace the Duke of Newcastle, for 20,000 guineas. It is said that the original cost of the mansion was upwards of 320,000*l.*

Self-made Men.—Columbus was a weaver; Franklin was a journeyman printer; Niebuhr was a peasant; Sextus V. was employed in keeping swine; Rollin was the son of a cutler; Ferguson and Burns, Scottish poets, were shepherds; Æsop was a slave; Homer was a beggar; Defoe was apprenticed to a hosier; Demosthenes was the son of a cutler; Hogarth was an engraver of pewter pots; Virgil was the son of a baker; Wolsey was the son of a butcher; Gay was an apprentice to a silk-mercer; Ben Jonson was a bricklayer; Porson was the son of a parish clerk; Prideaux was employed to sweep Exeter College; Akenside was the son of a butcher; Pope was the son of a merchant; Cervantes was a common soldier; Gifford and Bloomfield were shoemakers; Howard was apprenticed to a grocer; Halley was the son of a soap-boiler; Richard Arkwright was a barber for a number of years; Belzoni was the son of a barber; Blackstone was the son of a linen-draper; Buchanan was a private soldier; Butler was the son of a farmer; Canova was the son of a stone-cutter; Catherine the First of Russia was born a peasant; Captain Cook began his career in the merchant service as a cabin-boy; Curran was the son of poor parents; Sir Humphrey Davy was the son of a carver; Dodsley was a stocking weaver; Drake was the son of a shepherd; Hunter was apprenticed to a carpenter; Falconer was the son of a barber; Haydn was the son of a poor cartwright; Herschel was the son of a poor musician; Johnson was the son of a bookseller; Lord Tenterden was the son of a barber; La Fontaine was the son of an overseer of woods and forests; Milton was a schoolmaster; Parkes was the son of a small grocer; Pizarro was employed to keep hogs; Pollock was the son of a carpenter; Allan Ramsay was the son of a miner; Raffaelle was the son of a peasant; Richardson was the son of a joiner; Shakspere commenced his career poor, and as a menial; Kirke White was the son of a butcher.

Model Farms.—It is in contemplation at Carmarthen to establish a model farm, after the manner of Lord Ducie's and other similar establishments in England, for the advancement of agriculture in the district. W. Williams, Esq., M.P. for Coventry, has promised a subscription of 200*l.* for this purpose.—*Welshman.*

Bury St. Edmunds.—Several feet of the ashlar or stone casing, with a portion of the rubble core, have fallen from the top of the south-east angle of the Norman Tower, the concussion shaking the houses on both sides of the tower, but happily doing no injury to any one.—*Bury Post.*

Difference between Grey and Welsh Slate.—Who shall say that there is no poetry in a builder's soul? we could bring abundant proof to the contrary—as what shall be said to this? A Lancashire craftsman of that ilk was describing to a gentleman the respective merits of grey or flag slate, and Welsh or Westmoreland clearings, which we give in his own peculiar phraseology:—"Ah, Sir," said he, speaking of the grey, "They'll be whisht, while th' wind goes mad."

The Highest House in England.—By a recent survey, it has been ascertained that the Travellers' Inn, on the summit of the high mountain pass over Kirkstoor, leading from Wlod mere to Ulswater and Patterdale, stands on an elevation of 38 feet higher above the level of the sea than any other inhabited house in England.

Falling of a House.—On Wednesday last, a house in a forward state of erection, at Hart's Lands, belonging to Mr. Gibbon, being just ready to receive the roof, fell with a tremendous crash. Fortunately, the men employed in the building were not there, or, in all probability some lives would have been sacrificed. It appears that it had been run up too fast, and the heavy rains on the two previous days, added to a sandy soil for the foundation, produced the catastrophe.

On Thursday week, as some men were engaged in erecting a new pinnacle on the church at Tamworth, one of them fell from the top of the ladder, and his head was completely dashed to pieces. He has left a wife and five children.

A poor mechanic at Bristol, of the name of Bacon, has invented a pump and fire-engine, which, for compactness and power, is unique. It draws water at 22 feet from the surface, and throws to a great distance. Its cost is about 20*l.*, and it possesses an hydraulic power equal to a large engine worth 170*l.* or 180*l.* An experiment was made last week in the presence of several scientific men, and gave satisfaction.

Sales of Timber in the Country.—The *Stamford Mercury* of Friday, the 3rd instant, contains advertisements of twelve timber falls, to which buyers are invited.

Windsor Drainage.—The inhabitants have refused to co-operate in the outlay required for draining the town and Castle

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